Incorporating the Democratic Process

Training Starter Template

Objectives: All participants in the training will be able to:
- Recognize the value of including the democratic process into programming
- Gain ideas for incorporating the democratic process into projects and activities

Total amount of time: _____   **Number of participants**: _____

Preparation:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Materials:

_____

_____

_____

✓ ***Chart Paper, Index Cards***
✓ ***Committee and Club Planning Worksheet***

Training Opening

- Engage Participants   _____ minutes
  (Ice breaker/warm up activity related to the topic)

  _____

  _____

  _____

  Introduce the Topic   _____ minutes
  (Motivate participants, show them why the topic is important, and share objectives and agenda)

  _____

  _____

  _____

Training Middle   _____ minutes

- Explain that democracy is a form of government that is "by the people," specifically one that is driven by the rule of the majority. It's a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections. We make "for the people" happen by educating ourselves on important issues and making elected officials aware of our points of view. Some examples of everyday participation in the democratic process are voting in a local or national election, attending a school board meeting, or writing a letter to a public official about a topic of concern.
- Ask participants, "How have your students been exposed to the idea of democracy? Do they believe they can make a difference?"

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- Explain that students *do* have a role in the democratic process, and that they *can* make a difference. The more exposure students have to practicing civics in their everyday lives, the more likely they will become active citizens as adults.
- Remind participants that their program may already be incorporating the principles of the democratic process. For example, all of these represent the democratic process in action: encouraging students to work through conflict and differences via dialogue, asking for student votes to decide on a community project, and having a student advisory board.
- In pairs, have participants talk about activities they have done in their programs that have incorporated the democratic process. For each example, the pair should discuss how the activity may have influenced a student's level of civic engagement. For instance, students who attend a city council meeting may be more likely to bring up issues that are important to them, since they see other citizens successfully presenting their concerns to the council members. Ask a few participants to share.
- Now that participants have had a chance to discuss what their programs are already doing to encourage civic engagement, they can begin to build in additional ways for youth to experience the democratic process.
- Ask participants to work in groups to brainstorm ideas for incorporating the democratic process into their programs. Each table should be assigned a timeframe (daily, weekly, monthly, a few times a year, once a year) and should focus on activities that can be done within that timeframe. Every group should record their ideas on chart paper.
- After each group finishes brainstorming, they should hang their chart paper on the wall. Then all participants can circulate around the room, reading other groups' ideas and jotting down the ones they like best in index cards.
- Note: examples of the democratic process in action include forming committees and clubs on different topics, holding elections and debates on important decisions affecting the program, having students work through conflict with dialogue and deliberation, and seeking out opportunities to increase diversity and include multiple points of view.
- As a possible next step, begin to complete the ***Committee and Club Planning Worksheet***.

Training Wrap Up and Closing

- Summarize, consolidate   _____ minutes
  (Connect back to the objectives, check for understanding, and discuss questions)

  _____

  _____

  _____

- Plan Next Steps   _____ minutes
  (Be specific about application to immediate practice.)

  _____

  _____

  _____

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- Closing Comments   _____ minutes
  (Acknowledge, motivate and inspire)

  _____
  _____
  _____

Post-training assessment and revision
- Formal or informal assessment of effectiveness of training
- Note changes to make
- Note areas for additional training

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